

REMARKS

In an office action dated July 8, 2004, the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6-8, 10-13, 19-22 and 24-26 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Haneda et al. (U.S. Patent 6,349,328) in view of Meek (U.S. Pat. App. Pub No. 2002/0095464). Claims 5, 9, 14, 18, 23 and 27 were objected to as being dependent on rejected base claims, but were otherwise indicated to contain allowable subject matter.


Applicants have rewritten claims 5, 9, 14, 18, 23 and 27 in independent form, incorporating all the limitations of any base claims from which they originally depended.¹ Since these claims contained allowable subject matter, and were objected to solely on grounds of form, the claims as rewritten are now allowable.

The original independent claims have been cancelled, along with various dependent claims which are now superfluous. The dependency of some of the remaining dependent claims has been changed to depend on a surviving claim. Additionally, three new dependent claims have been added, reciting subject matter originally in dependent claims 6, 15 or 24, and depending from claims 9, 18 and 27, respectively. As amended, all dependent claims depend on one of the allowable independent claims, and are accordingly allowable.

¹ Through error, original dependent claim 11 recited dependence on claim 1, although it was obviously intended to depend on claim 10. In rewriting dependent claims 14 and 18 (both of which depended on claim 11), applicants have corrected this error by incorporating the limitations of claim 10 rather than claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, applicant submits that the claims are now in condition for allowance and respectfully requests reconsideration and allowance of all claims. In addition, the Examiner is encouraged to contact applicant's attorney by telephone if there are outstanding issues left to be resolved to place this case in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,
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